



**Summer 2010**

**US Embassy, Ashgabat—Quarterly Issue**

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***Alumni meet with Assistant Secretary Michael H. Posner***

On June 15th, 2010 Assistant Secretary Michael H. Posner met with ten alumni of various exchange programs to discuss U.S. – Turkmen relations. Alumni had a chance to share their experiences in



*M. Posner meeting with alumni*

the United States, and speak on US-Turkmenistan foreign relations. Moreover, the Assistant Secretary asked several questions regarding the Turkmenistan educational system, how alumni engage the educational community and the future of education in Turkmenistan. In return, alumni asked several questions regarding the Kyrgyzstan situation, oil and gas collaboration between the USA and Turkmenistan, and the Nabucco project. The roundtable was significant as alumni had a chance to learn the State Department’s views on Turkmenistan’s foreign policy.

***“Diversification in Turkmenistan” by JFDP alumna***

On August 17th, 2010, Guncha Byashiyeva, JFDP’05, conducted a presentation at Information Resource Center on: "Diversification in Turkmenistan". This presentation was dedicated to the diversification of pipeline routes, projects and energy transportation in Turkmenistan and included an overview of issues related to the national energy policy, pipeline developments and other transportation routes such as rail and sea transportation. Concentration was given to the positive impacts of new pipelines, projects, and oil-gas development for the country. During the presentation, attention was targeted towards government actions to removing obstacles that are in the way of implementing National Programs. Some critical issues are related to the Caspian Sea and new pipeline projects in the sea were discussed as mentioned in the official speeches of the President of Turkmenistan. The conclusions and suggestions of the workshop were based on the latest updates on expanding the other sectors of the economy, as well as looking at relations with Europe, Iran, Turkey, and China.

**Editorial Board:**

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**Special thanks to:** Guncha Byashiyeva, Ahmed Geldiyev

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### What is State Alumni?

Interactive, dynamic and password-protected, alumni.state.gov provides a central place for members to meet, share, learn, and collaborate.

### What does State Alumni offer?

State Alumni is a global community with more than 55,000 members.

*All members are verified. Once members, alumni can:*

- Network with alumni from other exchange programs
- Find grant and job opportunities
- Access free periodicals, newspapers and more
- Find the latest research in their field, plus career enhancing information
- Participate in Q&A Live discussions with experts
- Read alumni success stories, perspectives and ideas
- Stay involved through a local alumni association

### Benefits of being member of State Alumni Community:

- Connect with others in their hometown or country.
- Network and engage with other alumni from around the world.
- Share photos
- Free access to more than 20,000 periodicals, newspapers and journals—including abstracts, full-text articles and multimedia.

- New job and grant opportunities around the world are posted daily!
- Free access to more than \$33 billion in grants and funding opportunities
- Join top officials and experts to discuss a variety of topics in *Q&A LiveWeb* chats
- Suggest a guest or a topic for a *Q&A Live* discussion
- State Alumni hosts more than 40 communities. These communities function as websites within a website under the larger umbrella of State Alumni
- Alumni can join an alumni association and actively participate in events, volunteer activities and projects!

### *A quote to remember:*

*“Participation in an exchange program is not a one-time, finite event; it marks the beginning of an ongoing relationship between you, those you met on your exchange experience—and the United States.”*

If you want your article to be posted at Alumni Boom, please send it to:  
allaberdievajn@state.gov



### ***American Corner in Mary Offers Legal Training for Youth***



*Opening of Mock Trial event*

On July 21-25, Mary American Corner jointly with 7 FLEX alumni arranged a Youth Law School for 15 high school students. During the project participants listened to presentations on American Legal History, Anglo-Saxon and Continental law systems as well as the International Criminal Court, its establishment and functions. The participants learned about American, Russian and Turkmen judicial systems through presentations and activities. Students gained a good understanding of the trial process and the difference between civil and criminal Trials. In addition, students researched different judicial systems of various countries, short-poster presentations on Famous Trials and watched a trial movie called "Anatomy of Murder", where they were able to watch an actual criminal trial and see how the attorneys worked a case. Another fun and educational activity during this project was the Scripted Civil Trial, where the students could investigate the trial process and develop their public speaking skills. The most important and

successful event of this project was the Mock Trial Event, where Prosecution and Defense teams performed in a criminal case. The goal of having this event was the opportunity for the participants to learn about courtroom procedures more deeply and understand the position of the participants in the court.

### ***"Challenge yourself" Summer School organized by FLEX alumni in Ashgabat***



*FLEX alumni with participants*

demonstration on how things can turn out if a person is not prepared on the day of a speech. The demonstrations mainly introduced the basic mistakes of those who are on stage and are not informed on how to present a speech correctly. Then there was a discussion on how to improve public speaking skills. During the next session, alumni covered questions like: "What is a Speech?", "What is Public Speaking?", "Where do we use Public Speaking?" and "Who is the Speaker?" and such discussion topics like the "Fight or Flight" condition, "How to overcome stage fright" and "How to become a Better Speaker" were covered as well. Moreover, young people had a chance to learn about different types of speeches and there was focus on informative, persuasive, demonstrative and expressive speeches. At the end of the day, young people had to give a speech and the topics of the speech were informal.

Seven newly returned FLEX alumni organized the "Challenge yourself" summer school for 18 children aged 13-16 at the Information Resource Center, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy. The main goal of this event was to gather young people and to teach them such skills as public speaking, leadership and community service. Every day, alumni taught young people different topics. The first day Jennet Atayeva'10 and Gulshat Berdiyeva'10 talked about how to be a good leader. As an introduction to the session alumni gave famous quotes on leadership and discussed the meanings; later on they gave different activities on leadership skills and discussed the qualities of leader. Young people defined a leader and used such qualities as: courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence, pride, good temper, friendliness, truthfulness and justice. By the end of the day young people learned how to be a leader and what qualities a leader should possess.

The second day was dedicated to public speaking and Myahri Hajiyeva'10 and Ayna Pirkuliyeva'10 held different activities on this topic. The day started with

The last day of the summer school was dedicated to community service and was led by Dilyara Azizova'10 and Altyn Hallayeva'10. The day started with defining volunteerism and why it is important to conduct community service at your society. Then Dilyara and Altyn asked the participants of their opinion on community service and gave a lecture about volunteering in the USA and the need to help your own society by providing community service. One of the sessions of the day was to divide participants into groups, offer a few problems and ask young people to resolve them. Participants prepared presentations on their problems and solutions. In the end of the day FLEX alumni prepared presentations on their U.S. experiences and shared knowledge that they gained during the year. The summer school finished with an awards ceremony and participants and FLEX alumni plan to meet in the future to discuss possible joint projects.



### ***“Life is Theatre” in Turkmenabat***



*Snow white and Dwarfs performance*

Drama is the process while theatre is the product. It is the slogan which has been used in the work of our Drama team during the whole preparation, and the process for realizing the actual cognitive performance of a Disney cartoon “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” with the help of high school students. The “Life is the Theatre” project was funded by the Turkmen Youth Civic and Values Foundation (TYCVF) and the main goal of the project was to show an adolescent journey in which participants were able to do drama no matter what their functional level.

The biggest part of the project ‘Life is a Theatre’ was the preparation itself which had been going on for 3 months. At first I, (Lachyn Italmazova, FLEX’09) and my assistant Madina Alieva, FLEX’06 had auditions for the performance during one week in which approximately 50 teens came to show their talents and abilities; in the end we chose 17 participants for the play “Snow White and

the Seven Dwarfs.” Daily practices, Drama lessons, public speaking classes, organization of decorations and costumes – all this was a process which provided a way for adolescents to try out new behaviors and new roles. On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the first performance took place at the American Corner Turkmenabat (ACT) and at the same time it was the first experience for the Drama group. The play was performed for 2 hours and 70 attendees came to enjoy it. This wasn’t our only performance at ACT – we had a chance to perform several times. Drama participants were playing so energetically and lively in their roles of singing and dancing like professional actors. The most hilarious part for the audience was the conversation between Snow White and the seven dwarfs as there were several dances and songs. Thus, Drama actors discovered what fun it was to play a role that was different from themselves.

Our Drama journey continued as we had one more performance at the Ashgabat Turkish Cultural Center. It was an exciting and thrilling moment for each member of our group; it took 4 hours to prepare the stage. If at first actors were a bit shy and nervous, on stage they were able to play their roles by improvising and feeling their roles. There was much applause and cheer by the audience. At the end we prepared the ball dance and sang the song “Wonderful Life.” We were much appreciated and we saw our joint results and could proudly say that we reached our goal, our product. It was both productive and delightful for each of us. After coming back we went to the orphanage house bringing them some gifts from the donations we received.

For now our Drama team visits the American Corner Turkmenabat almost every day and they have already started holding their own clubs and community services and at the same time they attract other people in taking part. I personally have realized that life is the theatre and that the more opportunities adolescents have to try out new behaviors and expand their own repertoires, the more ability they gain in understanding who they are and who they want to be. I can say that my Drama team and I grew during this process becoming more mature, confident and outgoing and I am grateful to have such great people; I would also like to thank the TYCVF committee for giving us such a helpful opportunity, letting our dreams come true and making our community much better.

**By Lachyn Italmazova, FLEX’09**

### **Alumni Success story**

Leyla Ovezova is a student at the Moscow Pedagogical State University and a FLEX’09 who has been a great help throughout the years after she came back from the United States. As soon as she departed her native land, she conducted many new classes, such as “Story Writing Class”, “US Congress Club”; even while in Moscow Leyla kept in touch with the local American Corner, and most importantly she had an online Creative Writing Class, including enrollment in helping to write articles for Mary American Corner World Newsletter. This summer alumni have been doing a lot of volunteer work, such as opening new clubs and classes, organizing a Reader’s Day and leading a project called “Youth Legal School”. Leyla is a great example for the potential for community leaders because she is always dedicated to the ideas, work, volunteering and ready to help in any situation. Following life by her favorite quote: “If this world is not perfect, I will try to make it so”, she has become a part of MAC’s society.



**By Kseniya Hmelova, FLEX’10**

### ***William J. Fulbright Master's Degree Program alumnus' U.S. experience.***

I am very happy to be the first Fulbright Master Program alumni from Turkmenistan. My program was an intensive one year program in the Centre for Development Economics (CDE) of Williams College (one of the best colleges in US) in Williamstown, Massachusetts. When I first arrived there, after 6 weeks pre-academic language course at the University of Oklahoma I was surprised how small the town was, keeping in mind my stereotypes about the United States I used to have from movies and TV news. But after a few days I understood that Williamstown is a perfectly comfortable place for study. Surrounded by mountains and a forest I could enjoy all four seasons, starting with a warm summer, yellowish-red fall, 10-15 inches snowy winter, and blossoming spring.

From the very first day I felt a very warm and welcoming environment where everybody is happy to help you. The Fulbright welcome packet was designed in a way to explain everything you need to know about terms of scholarship, contact details, insurance package and other useful information. The college also provided us with a welcome packet explaining how things go on campus, all terms and facilities. The administration, professors and assistants were ready to help with any inquiry including personal issues. In that friendly environment I felt very comfortable to study, and indeed the program was pretty tough but manageable. Professors explained everything in a clear

way, starting from simple supply and demand diagrams and ending with complicated macroeconomic models and analysis of empiric econometric papers.

According to the program's schedule we visited Boston, New York and Washington where we had meetings and participated in conferences. Among these were meetings at the Federal Reserve, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Development Program and World Bank were most interesting and, as it could be guessed, we discussed the current financial crisis. I was very happy to discuss issues with people who really dealt with solving crises. Once again I visited New York to participate in the Fulbright seminar on Social Entrepreneurship. It was a very interesting and well-designed seminar full of different types of activities; I met many other Fulbrighters from different countries. With my CDE friends I also had beautiful and unforgettable trips to Las Vegas, Niagara Falls and Albuquerque.

I am really thankful for the Fulbright Program for the opportunity to study in the United States where I have learned a lot about economics, American education, American culture, and made many friends. I believe this knowledge and experience will be very helpful to me and my country in the future.

Representatives of Williams College are coming to Turkmenistan in early December to discuss the master's degree program that Ahmed Geldiyev attended.

Ahmed Geldiyev, Fulbright'10

### ***English Teachers' Conference in Ashgabat***

On July 26, 2010, thirty English teachers from all regions of Turkmenistan gathered together at the English Language Conference held at the Information Resource Center (IRC), Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat. The conference lasted for five days and was organized by 4 alumni of TEA (Teaching Excellence Achievement) program. This conference was funded by Democracy Outreach Alumni grants by Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy.

The teachers from Turkmenabat, Balkan, Mary and Ahal regions gathered together to practice their communication skills, listen and interact with native speakers, meet guest speakers, work with new technologies, and learn new teaching methods. They also got to play fun games, and made new professional contacts with their peers-teachers. The conference was divided into three main parts: speaking, communicative writing and basic computer skills. The main goals of speaking session were to introduce our teachers to many speaking games and activities and how these activities fit into lesson plans and to create our own lesson plans. During the communicative writing sessions teachers learned how to write a good essay and discussed essays skills and how to integrate them into lesson plans.

Basic computer skills sessions were held by Serdar Jorayev, one of the US Embassy staff who explained several computer programs such as MS Word and MS Excel and how to use the Internet for research skills. At the end of the conference, teachers had a chance to use a PowerPoint presentation to present what they learned during this event.

As a result of this conference the teachers created their own group lesson plans that meet all up-to-date requirements – they were interactive, communicative, and student-centered.



***Teachers discuss the material during peer teaching session***



## Meet our Alumni assistants at American Corners

### Turkmenabat American Corner

Name: Nazar Nazarov

Program and year: FLEX Program 2009/2010

Title: Alumni Assistant

Educational Background: High School #4 (1999-2006), High School #1 (2006-2009), Champs Charter High School (2009-2010) USA

Hometown: Turkmenabat, Turkmenistan

US City: Los Angeles

Opinion about USG (U.S. Government) exchange programs: In my opinion, USG exchange programs give an opportunity for students to get to know more about American culture and to be part of American either a high school or college educational system. Having been a part of American culture and successfully fulfilling my exchange year, I have good impressions and got to know more about America's politics and economics.

Advice to alumni: As you become an international student, i.e. an exchange student, you'll get an opportunity to be part of the American society. While you are in the US, there is a huge chance for you to learn more about the diversity of American society and how the government runs, and how it works. Just try to acquire as much knowledge as you can, it will definitely help you in the future for the benefit of our Turkmen society.



### Mary American Corner

Name: Kseniya Hmelyova



Program and year: FLEX 2009-2010

Title: FLEX Alumni Assistant

Educational Background: Secondary school # 4 in Shatlyk, Boise High School in America

Hometown: Shatlyk

US City: Boise

Opinion about USG (U.S. Government) exchange programs: I think that the FLEX program was a great chance for me because I had so many opportunities to develop myself and know more about this world. I learned a lot about American history, culture and traditions, and now I can share my experience with our community; then, it, in its turn, will develop and know more useful information about United States. Also this program helped me to be more independent. It is a good thing because it will be very useful in my future. I am so thankful to this program and very happy that I became a part of it.

Advice to alumni: Be helpful and develop your community as much as you can.



### Dashoguz American Corner

Name: Olga Seytmuradova

Program and year: FLEX 2010

Title: Dashoguz American Corner Alumni Assistant

Educational Background: School #7, Dashoguz

Hometown: Dashoguz

US City: Duluth, GA

Opinion about USG (U.S. Government) exchange programs: I think that USG programs help people from US and people from other countries to understand each other and create life-long friendships. Each of the USG exchange program participants makes a little contribution into a peaceful world where all nations live in harmony with each other.

Advice to alumni: Stay involved with your program, because it will give you many more opportunities in future. Besides, you will help other people.

### ***“Cultural Exchange project” in Dashoguz***

While studying at an American high school I had a chance to learn about research skills. It was interesting for me to discover how a teacher would explain everything regarding the research topic, and how to present it. This was something new to me. When I heard that Alisa Ilyasova, FLEX'07 was conducting a project on research skills – I became a part of learning group. The name of the project was “Cultural Exchange” and the project included such topics as how to do research and discover new cultures and traditions. The main goals of the project were to teach how to pursue research work, work online, and present information along with learning new facts about different cultures of the world.

The first day started with Alisa Ilyasova, FLEX'07, a leader of the project, acquainting the learners with the project details and rules. After a brief introduction, attendees were divided into three teams (five or six members each) and there were three countries: Russia, United Arab Emirates and Great Britain. Then teams were seated in different rooms to work and brainstorm on points they wanted to search on internet in the next few days of the project.

The next two days from 10 - 11 a.m. teams went to the internet café and searched for the needed information,



*FLEX alumni with participants*

searched information. Alisa and Alexandr Ibragimov (American Corner Volunteer) helped the working groups

during their research. As the final step, all groups were required to create their own names with logos and put them on the poster.

Finally, on the last day of the project, all three groups gave their presentations.

During the presentations there were questions asked, similarities and contrasts found between Russian, UAE and Great Britain's wedding traditions. When all three teams had presented their works, Alexander Ibragimov and Alisa Ilyasova '07 awarded each team member with a certificate and a pendant. This project was so interesting that participants decided to select any working day of Dashoguz American Corner and present those presentations for the Dashoguz American Corner attendees. By doing so, project learners will not only have culture exchanged within themselves but also spread it out to other people.

All in all, the project went successfully. Students were so interested in their research that they even stayed late in order to make a good presentation. Besides, students showed good teamwork and respect for each other. Moreover, the presentations were very interesting and it was noticeable that students had worked hard when they delivered it to the audience.

**By Olga Seytmuradova, FLEX'10**



*One of the groups presenting*



***There is great opportunity to get updates on Turkmen alumni activities through the newly developed Turkmen Alumni Community Facebook page.***

***All alumni related news, articles, announcements; pictures are posted on this page:***

***<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ashgabat-Turkmeni-stan/Turkmen-Alumni-Community/123167028470>***

## FUN FACTS

Before computer entered our lives:

**MEMORY** was something you lost with age,

**APPLICATION** was for employment,

**PROGRAM** was a TV show,

**KEYBOARD** was a piano,

**WEB** was a spiders home,

**VIRUS** was the flu,

**HARD DRIVE** was a long trip on the road.....

**Unbelievable change !!!!**

<http://www.gigglepedia.com/funny-articles.asp>

- *Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch procejt at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosnt mtttaer waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. Tihis is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter b*
- *China has more English speakers than the United States.*
- *The word 'News' is actually an acronym standing for the 4 cardinal compass points - North, East, West, and South!*
- *The word Tips is actually an acronym standing for 'To Insure Prompt Service'.*
- *Donald Duck comics were banned in Finland because he doesn't wear trousers.*
- *"Stewardesses" is the longest word that is typed with only the left hand.*
- *While it took the radio 38 years, and the television a short 13 years, it took the World Wide Web only 4 years to reach 50 million users.*
- *Children laugh about 400 times a day, while adults laugh on average only 15 times a day.*
- *If you're over 100 years old, there's an 80% chance you're a woman.*
- *Muhammad is the most common name in the world.*
- *Someone on Earth reports seeing a UFO every three minutes.*
- *You share your birthday with at least 9 other million people in the world.*

<http://www.funfactz.com>